

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Bob Latta
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“5G and Beyond: Exploring the Next Wireless Frontier”**

March 16, 2022

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Good morning, and welcome to today’s hearing on wireless spectrum.

For decades, the U.S. has pioneered innovative ways to manage one of our nation’s most valuable resources: access to the airwaves. Decisions on how best to utilize these airwaves to maximize their potential has led to the growth of Wi-Fi, multiple generations of mobile technology from 2G to 5G, the app economy, and so much more. The massive benefits these technologies have had have truly been transformational to our economy and our way of life.

A recent report estimates that unlicensed spectrum generates over \$95 billion dollars per year in the connected technology market. I am a Co-Chair of the Wi-Fi caucus, and when Wi-Fi was first created, no one could have predicted the impact it would have on our economy.

The same is true for licensed spectrum use.

In the 1990s, Congress exclusively provided the FCC the authority to auction off licenses to use a portion of the airwaves. Since then, the FCC has held over 100 auctions for various slices of the airwaves to power everything from 3G to the radio.

In addition to ushering in a new way to harness the efficiency of the free market, the FCC's auction authority has played a critical role in paving the way for new, innovative services.

By auctioning licenses for certain portions of the airwaves, users have certainty that they can invest upwards of tens of billions of dollars in the infrastructure necessary to use those airwaves without fear of being interfered with. The last two auctions alone have netted over \$100 billion dollars for the U.S. Treasury.

However, as more and more of the spectrum is being used, auctioning spectrum has become more complex. As new, commercial uses are introduced, the possibility of those use-cases raising the potential for harmful interference has put a spotlight on how the FCC makes such a decision.

These concerns are magnified when Federal agencies are using a band adjacent to a new commercial user. Over the years, we have seen challenges with how agencies coordinate their plans for introducing new services and studying the potential for harmful interference. As the Energy and Commerce Committee continues to build on its work to improve the spectrum management process, we should be looking at how these decisions will build trust in the engineering and certainty in the licensing process. That when a decision is made, all users can accept the result and not work to further undermine it.

With the FCC's authority expiring at the end of this fiscal year to conduct an auction and issue licenses, it is important that the Energy and Commerce Committee review what has worked, what has not, and is

able to provide necessary direction to the FCC as spectrum issues become more difficult.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on the opportunities and challenges that lay ahead for smartly managing our spectrum resources.

Thank you, and I yield back.